

Message Text

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ACTION XMB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2215

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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ABIDJAN FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EFIS, SG

SUBJ: FISHING CREWS STRIKE SOSAP

REF: STATE 191019

SUMMARY: STRIKE BY SENEGALESE OFFICERS AND CREW MEMBERS HAS ADDED
TO SOSAP'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. CAUSES OF STRIKE ARE BOTH
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL. END SUMMARY.

1. ADDING TO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES OF ALREADY HARD-PRESSED
PARA-STATEL SOCIETE SENEGALAISE D'ARMAMENT A LA PECHE (SOCAP)
IS TWO-WEEK OLD STRIKE BY SENEGALESE OFFICERS AND SAILORS.
GRIEVANCES LEADING TO STRIKE CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO
CATEGORIES:

A. SOCIAL. AS SENEGAL EXPANDS ITS TUNA INDUSTRY INTO AREAS
BEYOND ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS TRADITIONALLY FISHED BY
NON-AFRICAN BOATS, RACIAL TENSIONS HAVE BEEN EXACERBATEC BOTH
BETWEEN SENEGALESE AND EUROPEAN (LARGELY FRENCH) BOATS OVER
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FISHING AREAS, AND BWTWEEN SENEGALESE CREWMEN AND THEIR FRENCH

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS. THESE PROBLEMS ARE COMPLICATED BY DIFFERENCES IN FISHING TECHNIQUES: FRENCH BOATS ARE PRIMARILY POLE FISHERS, BAITING TO ATTRACT SCHOOLS OF FISH. SOSAP BOATS ARE PURSE SEINERS, WHICH LEADS TO QUESTIONS OF TANGLING NETS AND STALING CATCHES. PROXIMATE CAUSE OF PRESENT STRIKE WAS CONTRETEMPS BETWEEN SENEGALESE TUNA SKIPPER AND FRENCH CAPTAIN OVER COURTESY ON GHIH SEAS AND RIGHTS TO FISH SCHOOL BAITED BY FRENCH BOAT. PROBLEM WORSENER WHEN MILITANT YOUNG SENEGALESE OFFICERS WALKED OUT IN SUPPORT OF THEIR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN.

B. FINANCIAL. WITH ROUGHLY HALF ITS 23 BOATS DEADLINED FOR REPAIRS AT ANY ONE TIME, SOSAP IS HAVING TROUBLE MAKING ENDS MEET. ALREADY IN AREARS TO EXIM FOR PURCHASE OF THREE AMERICAN MADE TUNA BOATS, SOSAP HAS BEEN CUTTING CORNERS IN PAYING ITS CREWS (SOSAP HAS NOT YET RESPONDED TO REPRESENTATION MADE BY EMBASSY FOLLOWING RECEIPT STATE 191019.) STRIKING SAILORS ARE DEMANDING VACATION PAY, HIGHER BONUSES, AND PAY PARITY WITH EXPATRIATE OFFICERS.

2. SOSAP ADMINISTRATOR MALIK DIA AT FIRST TRIED TO MINIMIZE STRIKE, TERMING FRANCO-SENEGALESE INCIDENT "BANAL" AND URGING STRIKERS TO RETURN TO WORK BEFORE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, SINCE ESTABLISHED MANS OF CONCILIATION HAD NOT BEEN EXHAUSTED. STRIKE PERSISTED DURING PAST WEEK, BUT SEPT 13 SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS CLAIMED SOSAP FISHERMEN HAD DECIDED RETURN TO WORK, WHILE CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS WITH MANAGEMENT. LE SOLEIL REPORTS SOSAP WORKERS HAVE SCHEDULED SEPT 15 MEETING WITH MANAGEMENT.; EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR SOSAP'S LABOR DIFFICULTIES, WHICH COULD AGGRAVATE EXISTING CASH FLOW PROBLEM. AGGREY

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